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Transportation

DRIVER'S STUDY GUIDE



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OPR: 31 LRS/LGRO (SSgt Kory J. Kearney)

Certified by: 31 LRS/LGRO
(SMSgt Berry L. Squires)

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This pamphlet explains driving criteria for Italy. It is a guide for all personnel who will operate an Allied Forces in Italy (AFI) registered vehicle. The purpose of this pamphlet is to assist new personnel in meeting all requirements for receiving an AFI license. It is intended to familiarize the driver with local driving conditions in Italy. Ensure all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 37-123, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://afrims.amc.af.mil>.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This document is updated to reflect new Italian driving laws. These updated laws include the age requirements for operation of two-wheeled motor vehicles, paragraph **1.11.**, and the requirement to drive with headlights on at all times when driving outside urban areas, paragraph, **2.14.**

INTRODUCTION

In Italy, as in most European countries, negligence resulting in injury or death to others is a criminal offense. Therefore, any vehicle accident involving injuries or death may subject a driver to criminal prosecution in the Italian courts with the prospect of being fined or imprisoned. Punishments are especially severe for offenses such as improper passing, speeding, reckless driving, and driving under the influence. So remember, when you put the key into the ignition and turn it, you are responsible for control of that vehicle. **THINK SAFETY!** (Note: The Allied Forces in Italy (AFI) license is not a license; it is an OFFICIAL translation of your stateside license and must be carried in conjunction with your valid state or national license. For the purposes of this study guide, it will be referred to as an “AFI license”.)

Chapter 1

ALLIED FORCES IN ITALY (AFI) LICENSES

Section 1A—General information

1.1. Authority: 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron (LRS) Office of Operator Records & Licensing may issue AFI licenses to US military personnel (permanent party and TDY), civilian component, and dependents stationed in Italy. The designated office will ensure that applicants meet requirements before receiving an AFI license.

1.2. Driving is a privilege, not a right: The privilege to operate a Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) while stationed in Italy is limited to the terms outlined in the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and regulatory guidance set forth in the US Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT) Instruction 11240.29D, *Procedures for Acquisition of US Forces in Italy Motor Vehicle Operator's License*, issued by the US Navy in Naples, Italy.

1.3. Implied consent provisions: Implied consent provisions defined in the Air Force Instruction (AFI) 31-204 paragraph 2.3, *Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision*, are similar to those presently enforced in the United States. Any person who drives a motor vehicle is presumed to have given consent to a chemical test of his/her blood, breath, or urine for the purpose of determining the alcohol content in the body. Refusal to submit to a test if requested by law enforcement officials will result in a loss of driving privileges for a minimum of one year.

1.4. Respect for law enforcement authority: When driving a vehicle you are required to stop when signaled by an officer, official, or agent charged with the detection and prevention of traffic offenses. The driver is required to submit his/her registration document, state side or country license, AFI license, and any other documents that may be requested by the Law Enforcement Official. It is important to note that if you are required to pay a traffic fine to a host nation police, you should obtain a receipt.

1.5. Culpable homicide: Anyone who, by negligence, causes the death of a human being may be punished by imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years. If the act was committed in violation of rules governing road traffic or prevention of industrial accidents, punishment may result in imprisonment. If an unlawful act results in death, injury to another or multiple deaths and injuries, punishment may be imposed for the most serious case. This means that punishment can be increased by one-third that of a lesser offense, not to exceed 12 years confinement.

Section 1B—Obtaining an AFI license

1.6. Eligibility: In order to obtain an AFI license, an individual must meet the following prerequisites:

- a. Must be at least 18 years of age at the time of application.
- b. Possess and submit to the test administrator: a valid license from one of the 50 states or US territories; a valid license from any country; or a valid International Drivers License issued from any country other than Italy.
- c. Attend a Local Conditions Course II Safety Briefing administered by Ground Safety.

- d. All motorcycle operators must have “MOTORCYCLE” endorsed on their stateside license or have a motorcycle permit from their state and complete the Aviano Course IV (Motor Safety Foundation Course) prior to being authorized a motorcycle endorsement on their AFI license.

1.7. Testing requirements: After completing the Local Conditions Course II, applicants must pass a locally administered written examination. The exam is separated into two different subject areas: road signs (50 questions) and road code (30 questions). To receive the AFI license, applicants must answer at least 45 questions correctly on the road signs test and at least 27 questions correctly on the road code portion of the test. Everyone must take both portions of the test. The only exceptions will be applicants who possess a valid Italian license, a valid USAREUR license with a valid stateside license, or any other license issued from another European country (to include military translations equivalent to the AFI license) with a valid stateside license.

1.8. Expiration date of license: For US military personnel and their dependents, the AFI license expires on the last day of the month of your sponsor’s Date Eligible to Return Overseas (DEROS), providing the individual possesses a valid license throughout the DEROS. For individuals possessing a stateside license from a state without an automatic exemption clause, the AFI license will expire on the date his/her license expires or DEROS, whichever is earlier.

1.8.1. For US DoD civilians/contractors and their dependents, the AFI licenses will expire on the same expiration date of their civilian license or the expiration date on their identification card, whichever is earlier.

1.8.2. AFI licenses for TDY personnel will expire with the date on their orders or state license, whichever is earlier. A temporary AFI license may be issued for no longer than 1 year.

Section 1C—Requirements for operating vehicles in Italy

1.9. Operation of Privately Owned Vehicles (POV): A valid stateside license accompanied by an official AFI license, provided by the 31 LRS Operator Records & Licensing Office, is required for operating AFI-plated vehicles. (Neither visiting family members nor Local Nationals (LN) are authorized to drive AFI plated POVs. The only exceptions are for mechanics working on AFI plated vehicles.) Note: The driver must possess an AFI license to operate an AFI-plated or cover-plated vehicle whether the vehicle is a POV or Government Owned Vehicle (GOV) to include leased or rental vehicles.

1.10. Operation of GOV: US GOVs and rentals less than 14,000 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) may be operated under the same conditions required for operating POVs. Operating a GOV over 14,000 pounds GVW requires an AFI license, valid stateside license and an AF Form 2293, **US Air Force Motor Vehicle Operator Identification Card** (computer generated). Each type of military vehicle a person is authorized to operate must be annotated on their AF Form 2293.

1.11. Operation of two-wheeled motor vehicles: According to Italian Law Decrees Number 9 Article 6, Number 151, Number 214 and AF regulations, the use of approved helmets by all operators and passengers of mopeds/motorcycles is mandatory. To operate a moped/motorcycle, regardless of your age, on or off the installation, you must possess a valid driver’s license with motorcycle endorsement and meet the following requirements:

- a. Must be 14 years of age and possess above certification to operate a 50cc moped.

- b. Must be 16 years of age and possess Category A1 of the above certification to operate up to 11 kilowatt (kw) or 125cc motorcycles.
- c. Must be 18 years of age and possess Category A2 of the above certification, or license, to operate up to 25 kw (no limit on the cc) motorcycles; Motorcycle Safety Course II completion card/state-side endorsement (required unless proof is provided that your state does not require an endorsement for that cc class)/passengers authorized.
- d. Must be 21 years of age and possess Category A3 of the above certification, or license, to operate over 35 (kw) or 350cc motorcycles; Motorcycle Safety Course II completion card/stateside endorsement/passengers authorized.

1.12. In addition to basic penalties for operating a vehicle or motorcycle without a license (revoked or suspended), the vehicle or motorcycle you are operating may be confiscated.

Chapter 2

OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND TRAFFIC LAWS

Section 2A—Operator responsibilities

2.1. Law enforcement authority: US Military personnel driving a POV or GOV in Italy must obey the direction of Italian law enforcement authority, US Military and Security Forces. Failure to comply with traffic laws, signals, or directions of law enforcement authority may result in suspension or revocation of driver's license, withdrawal of vehicle registration privileges, or both, and citation by military or Italian police.

2.2. Insurance requirements: AFI 31-204 establishes that third party liability insurance is mandatory on all POVs prior to registration or operation of the vehicle. Italian law provides that a 500 Euro fine may be imposed for operating a motor vehicle without liability insurance. If an uninsured vehicle is found parked on a public road, its registered owner must pay the fine and the vehicle may be impounded and held pending payment. While the vehicle is being held, storage fees will accumulate daily until the vehicle fines are paid in full. If all fines have not been paid in full after 60 days, the vehicle will be confiscated.

Section 2B—Italian traffic laws

2.3. Right of way: Unless otherwise posted, all vehicles approaching from the right, including bicycles, have the right of way at uncontrolled intersections. The same basic rule applies at traffic circles. Pay particular attention to road signs and markings as rules may differ from place to place. You must yield the right of way to trolley cars and trams when crossing tracks.

2.4. Rights and privileges of bicycles and scooters: It is important to adjust your driving techniques to provide for the large number of small vehicles on the roads of Europe as compared to stateside traffic. Bicycles and scooters play a very important role in Italy.

2.4.1. The Italian Road Code states that bicycles and scooters have the same rights and privileges in traffic as automobiles. Operators of these smaller vehicles assume the same responsibilities and observe all regulations applying to other vehicles.

2.4.2. You may find many drivers with very little training, which is often reflected in erratic traffic behavior. It is your responsibility to watch out for them. Be prepared to allow for many unexpected actions by operators of small two-wheeled vehicles, and be extremely alert any time you are driving.

2.5. Turning and signaling: All four-wheeled motor vehicles and all motorcycles designed for street riding must be equipped with turn signals to be registered. Mopeds and motorcycles designed for off-road use are not required to have turn signals installed. Use extreme caution when making turns at intersections. Smaller vehicles often stop in potential blind spots to your rear or to either side of you and will proceed directly into your path of travel.

2.6. Passing: It is forbidden to begin passing another vehicle when the driver proceeding or following has already signaled their intention to pass. It is also forbidden to pass any vehicle stopped to allow pedestrians to cross.

2.6.1. Vehicles being overtaken must stay as close as possible to the right edge of the road. If a cyclist is ahead of your vehicle on a narrow street, slow down and wait until the cyclist can be overtaken with adequate clearance. You are required to give cyclists a minimum of one meter (approximately 3 feet) clearance when passing them.

2.6.2. Overtaking to the right is permitted when the driver of the vehicle being overtaken signals a left turn on a highway with more than one lane of traffic in the same direction. Trolley cars may be overtaken on the right when there is sufficient room for passing on the right of the tracks. If there is not a traffic island at the boarding point, passing is prohibited while passengers are entering or exiting stopped trolleys.

2.6.3. Italian law does not require that you stop for buses (school or other) loading or unloading passengers. However, on base you are required to stop on both sides of the street for all buses loading or unloading passengers.

2.7. Traffic signals: The following signals may be different from those in some states in America:

- a. A red light accompanied with a green arrow pointing in any direction indicates that vehicles in the appropriate lane may proceed with the right of way in that direction only.
- b. Right turns at red lights are not permitted in Italy.
- c. Blinking yellow lights in Italy blink the same color in all directions. When driving on a priority road, use extreme caution and reduce your speed when approaching intersections during late night and early morning hours.
- d. If you have a yield sign in your direction of travel, you must stop before proceeding to the priority road.
- e. Special lights to control the transit of trolley cars may accompany traffic lights.

2.8. Sound signals: Except in cases of immediate danger, use of sound signals (horns) is prohibited in some inner city areas when posted. When approaching intersections at night or passing other vehicles, the intermittent flashing of headlights instead of sounding your horn is permitted. Emergency response vehicles are exempt from the prohibitions and limitations related to use of sound signals.

2.9. Stopped, parked, or disabled vehicles: All motor vehicles stopped on roads (other than for traffic signals) must have signal devices (hazards) on to alert other drivers of their position. If your vehicle is disabled on the autostrada, park your vehicle within the lines of the emergency lane or shoulder with signal devices on and place a warning triangle 100 meters (328 feet) to the rear of the vehicle to alert oncoming traffic (i.e. changing tire, adding fluids). Any person exiting a vehicle, for any type of maintenance or just to place the required warning triangle (50 meters/164 feet to the rear of the vehicle if not on the autostrada), must wear a reflective vest at all times. Those not wearing the vest could receive fines from 33 Euros to 137 Euros. The Article of Law also states that the vest must be marked UNI EN 471, which is the European Community's marking. If your vehicle is disabled a warning triangle must be placed at least 50 meters (164 ft) from the rear of the vehicle to warn approaching traffic (i.e. accident, adding fluids, changing tire on a road other than the autostrada). If your vehicle is disabled on the autostrada you must place a warning triangle at least 100 meters behind your vehicle to alert oncoming traffic. If your vehicle is disabled on a curve, you must place the warning triangle at the beginning of the curve to alert oncoming traffic.

2.10. Parking: A parking slot marked with a blue line indicates pay parking. You must purchase a ticket from a machine located nearby or from a parking attendant. The ticket must be displayed in the windshield of the vehicle. Parking is prohibited within 5 meters of an intersection and 7 meters of railroad crossings. Police may remove any parked vehicle that causes serious danger or obstruction of traffic. The vehicle owner is responsible to pay the transportation and storage expenses prior to the release of the vehicle.

2.11. Obstruction of traffic: If traffic is obstructed as a result of a breakdown, the driver must push the vehicle to a parking zone or paved shoulder if possible. If substances are spilled, the driver must warn other drivers by posting warning triangles, flags, etc.

2.12. Drunk driving: Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Depending on the impact of your actions, you could face up to 6 months confinement.

2.12.1. Active duty military personnel could face additional charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for a Driving Under the Influence (DUI). DUI may be punished by court-martial, Article 15 or other administrative action.

2.12.2. In Italy, any person registering .05 or higher on a Breathalyzer Test is considered to be over the legal limit for alcohol consumption.

2.13. Speed: Speed is the number one cause of fatal vehicle accidents involving Americans in Italy. Your vehicle speed must be adjusted to road, traffic, and weather conditions. Speed limits in Europe are posted in kilometers per hour (kph). You may not exceed 50 kph (30 mph) in urban areas (outside the center of town). For American specification vehicles, use the vehicle kilometer gauge usually located underneath the miles per hour (mph) gauge on the instrument panel. Older American vehicles may not be equipped with a kph gauge. If you own a vehicle without a kph gauge, here is a quick formula for converting mph to kph. A km is approximately 6/10 of a mile; you can convert to mph by multiplying the number of kph by 0.6. For example: $30 \text{ kph} \times 0.6 = 18.0$ or 18 mph. To convert mph to kph, divide mph by 0.6. Additional speed limitations include: The maximum speed limit in rural areas, unless otherwise posted, is 90 kph. Passenger transport vehicles (buses) with a GVW of 17,000 pounds may not exceed 70 kph when carrying passengers. Cargo transport vehicles may not exceed 60 kph when loaded. Vehicles transporting dangerous or hazardous cargo may not exceed 40 kph in rural areas and 30 kph in urban areas. A fine may be imposed for exceeding the posted speed limit. Fines will increase by the number of kilometers exceeding the speed limit. The maximum speed limit on the autostrada is 130 kph under normal conditions, 110 kph if it is raining and 50 kph in the fog (nebbia).

2.14. Use of headlights and parking lights: Vehicle headlights are required to be turned on at all times when outside of an urban area. It is highly suggested that you keep your headlights on at all times, everywhere. Use of parking lights is mandatory when parked on the side of public highways. Exceptions are motorcycles and vehicles parked in appropriate parking slots or in areas where public lighting is adequate. Headlights are required to be on at all times when driving on the autostrada.

2.15. License plates: All vehicles with four or more wheels must have license plates securely mounted on the front and rear of the vehicle. Motorcycles and mopeds are only required to have one plate mounted on the rear. (NOTE: U.S. Plates are not authorized.)

2.15.1. Trailers being towed must display a duplicate of the license plate corresponding to the towing vehicle.

2.15.2. License plates may not be surrounded by ornamentation to include covers and plate holders.

2.15.3. All license plates must be kept clear of all obstructions to include a trailer hitch or ball.

2.15.4. Rear license plates must be illuminated at all times, on all types of vehicles (cars, mopeds, motorcycles, trailers etc.).

2.16. Pedestrians: Pedestrians in painted crosswalks have the right of way on and off base. Pay particular attention to pedestrians gathered at bus stops and crosswalks, as they may not give any warning before darting into the road.

2.17. Cellular phones: Italian law prohibits the use of cellular phones while operating a motor vehicle unless a hands-free device is used.

2.18. Illegal acts on the autostrada: It is illegal to hitchhike, pick up hitchhikers, make U-turns, tow a vehicle or work on vehicle on the Autostrada (except for changing a tire, adding gasoline or water). It is also illegal to tow a vehicle on any Italian road. Only qualified/certified vehicles can tow another vehicle (i.e. ACI, ZETA, etc.).

Chapter 3

SAFETY

Section 3A—Weather conditions

3.1. Rain: When it begins to rain, roads are very slippery due to the mixture of oil and grease residue on the road surface; use extreme caution. Italian roads do not allow for adequate drainage; water puddles build in the center and at the edges of the road creating serious hazards. Pay close attention to your speed because you may be driving too fast for these conditions even though you are not exceeding the posted speed limit.

3.2. Fog (nebbia): Throughout the Aviano area and most of northern Italy, fog rolls in suddenly and without warning. Fog lights are not required but are highly recommended. Fog lights not only enhance your visibility but also alert other drivers of your position. You should be alert to sudden weather changes in all areas near the Dolomite Mountains. Hugging the right side of the road in foggy weather may be recommended in the States, but this is not a good practice in Italy because of bicyclists or the possibility of stopped or double-parked vehicles. If fog becomes too dense to see, get off the road!

3.3. Snow and ice: When starting from a stop on icy surfaces, accelerate slowly to allow tires to obtain the maximum traction possible. Avoid sudden acceleration as your vehicle may lose traction and spin out of control.

3.3.1. The power of your engine is the best brake you have when stopping on snow or ice. Begin a gradual deceleration well in advance of your planned stopping point and apply your brakes lightly. Avoid any sudden braking if possible. If you must descend a slippery downgrade, use low gear or low range.

3.3.2. You are highly encouraged to carry tire chains in your vehicle at all times during fall and winter months. Italian law requires tire chains to be mounted on your tires when traveling in the mountains during winter months and the roads are not clean of snow.

3.3.3. Another road hazard common in this area is black ice. In freezing temperatures, it may appear as a wet spot on the road or on dark paved roads you may not see anything at all, hence the name “Black Ice.” These spots on the road are thin sheets of ice that may cause you to lose control of your vehicle if you are caught unaware.

Section 3B—Other driving hazards

3.4. Night driving: One hazard of driving at night in Italy is two-wheeled vehicles without tail lights. These vehicles are usually not visible until you are very close to them. Another road hazard is concrete markers, called “herbies,” which commonly border Italian roads. These markers can be obstructed and could cause serious damage to the vehicle or injury to passengers if struck. Use extreme caution if you must pull off the road.

3.5. Railroad crossings: Approach all railroad crossings with caution, particularly those that are unguarded. Do not rely solely on watchmen, gates or automatic warning devices to alert you of oncoming trains.

3.6. Seat belts: Wear seat belts when the vehicle is in motion. While Italian law states the wearing of seat belts is mandatory for all passengers, only vehicles registered after 26 April 1990 must have seat belts mounted in the rear. This law however does not apply to AFI plated vehicles. AFI plated vehicles must have seat belts mounted for every occupant in the vehicle. Italian law states that all children up to 12 years of age, with exception if the child is taller than 4 ft 11 in (59 inches), must be placed in a child restraint seat.

3.7. Open bed pickups: It is illegal to ride in the back of open-bed pickup trucks, on or off base, in Italy.

3.8. Safety gear: It is Air Force policy that all military personnel and their dependents must wear an approved bicycle safety helmet on and off the installation when riding a bicycle. Highly visible or reflective outer garments are required during hours of darkness or inclement weather. AFI 91-207, *The US Air Force Traffic Safety Program*, requires all personnel riding mopeds or motorcycles wear a brightly colored or contrasted vest or jacket as an outer upper garment during the day and reflective vest at night. Outer upper garments must be clearly visible and not covered with backpacks or other items.

Section 3C—Accidents and claims

3.9. Vehicle accidents: Italian law states that if you are the first or one of the first persons to come upon the scene of an accident with injured persons, you must stop and render assistance. Only if sufficient help is already there are you permitted to continue on.

3.10. Accident reporting and procedures. If you are involved in a minor accident in a POV, you must report it to the Security Forces within 72 hours. Major accidents must be reported as soon as possible (ASAP). If you were operating a GOV that was involved in an accident, you must report all accidents ASAP. You must complete Standard Form 91, **Operator Report of Motor Vehicle Accident** and a DD Form 518, **Accident Identification Card**, if damage was caused to private property.

3.10.1. The operator of the vehicle involved in an accident must give his/her name, address, and license plate number to any requesting law enforcement authority on the scene.

3.10.2. If you hit an unoccupied vehicle, attempt to locate the owner immediately. If you are unable to find anyone, leave your name, address and phone number on the windshield for when the owner returns.

3.10.3. In the event of an accident, vehicles should not be moved unless police officials give approval or if in a minor accident and all parties agree to clear the scene. Drivers are advised to refrain from making any statements, oral or written, to claimants or their agents regarding liability, cause of an accident, or the possibility of claims approval.

3.11. Claims: If an accident involves only POVs, contact your insurance company as soon as possible. If your POV is involved in an accident with a GOV, direct your claim to the base legal office.

Chapter 4

TRAVEL TO OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

4.1. International Drivers License: All personnel who drive outside of Italy must have an International Drivers License in their possession. Obtain an application for an International License at the Security Forces Pass & Registration Office, Operator Records & Licensing Office or on-line via the internet. You should be aware that International Drivers Licenses are not valid in the issuing country. Note: The AFI license is not valid outside of Italy.

4.1.1. An Italian certificate of insurance (white and yellow card) must be displayed at all times while in Italy. Most insurance agencies issue both the Italian and international insurance together.

4.1.2. An international certificate of insurance (green card) is required in most European countries, and may be obtained from your insurance company. The international certificate of insurance must be valid for the entire time outside of Italy, and must be displayed in the windshield of your vehicle.

Chapter 5

INTERNATIONAL ROAD SIGNS

5.1. Road sign information: Most road signs in Europe are entirely different than those in the United States. However, you will find it reasonably easy to learn these signs since they contain few printed words and are, for the most part, self-explanatory. The following information may help you identify road signs in Italy:

- a. Triangular shaped signs (red trim) mean WARNING/DANGER.
- b. Circular shaped signs (red trim) mean PROHIBITED.
- c. Circular shaped signs with blue background mean MANDATORY ACTION.
- d. Rectangular shaped signs with blue background are INFORMATIVE.

5.2. Driving outside of Italy: Before driving outside of Italy, obtain a travel booklet of road signs for the country/countries you are going to be driving in or through because there may be differences in some signs from country to country.

Chapter 6

FORMS ADOPTED

6.1. AF Form 2293, US Air Force Motor Vehicle Operator Identification Card; Standard form 9, Operator Report of Motor Vehicle Accident; DD Form 518, Accident Identification Card

ROBERT YATES, Brigadier General, USAF
Commander

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFMAN 37-123, *Management of Records*

AFI 31-204, *Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision*

AFI 91-207, *The US Air Force Traffic Safety Program*

NAVSUPPACT INST 11240.29d, *Procedures for Acquisition of US Forces in Italy Motor Vehicle Operator's License*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI—Allied Forces in Italy

ASAP—As Soon As Possible

DEROS—Date Eligible for Return from Overseas

DUI—Driving Under the Influence

GOV—Government Owned Vehicle

GVW—Gross Vehicle Weight

KW—Kilowatt

KPH—Kilometers per Hour

LN—Local National

LRS—Logistics Readiness Squadron

MPH—Miles per Hour

NAVSUPPACT—Naval Support Activity

POV—Personal Owned Vehicle

RDS—Records Disposition Schedule

SOFA—Status of Forces Agreement

TDY—Temporary Duty